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# Are Embassies Chronically Insecure?

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**A**FTER radical Iranian students climbed over a wall and overran the United States Embassy in Teheran in 1979, investigators found that only 13 lightly armed Marines and a few civilian security officers had been guarding the 27-acre compound.

Four years later, after Moslem suicide bombers encountered almost no resistance as they destroyed two American Embassy buildings in Lebanon, investigators found that security officers had been emphasizing the construction of "safe havens" in embassy basements. Diplomats were to hide there if mobs of angry students broke into the buildings.

And after last week's revelations — a third marine arrested on charges of espionage in Moscow, while the United States and the Soviet Union each accused the other of bugging its embassies — investigators are discovering that the State Department's security program has again been concentrating on fighting the last war. Around the world, officers were busily building walls and vehicle barriers to thwart suicide bombers.

Terrorism obviously remains a real threat. But still, "we really are behind in most of these matters," said John Zioolkowski, a Senate aide who drafted a critical report on the Moscow embassy last fall. After the Beirut bombings, a special State Department advisory panel headed by retired Adm. Bobby R. Inman, a former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, recommended renovating or replacing more than 100 embassies and consulates. A classified appendix to that report, citing numerous examples, warned of a significant threat of espionage at the embassies in Moscow and other East European cities. It suggested that all Soviet employees be removed from the Moscow embassy because many of them worked for the K.G.B., the Soviet security agency. Secretary of State George P. Shultz endorsed the renovations and proposed a \$4.4 billion rebuilding program. But the counterespionage recommendations languished and the Soviet

employees remained in the Moscow embassy until the Kremlin withdrew them last year, in retaliation for an order to reduce the number of Russians in diplomatic posts in the United States.

"Sure there are K.G.B. agents" among them, a senior State Department officer said of the Russians cited in the Inman report when it came out. "But there are also many other loyal people who have worked for the U.S. for years despite great hardship."

The marine who was arrested last week had been a guard at the American Consulate in Leningrad five years ago. And, like two other marines in custody, the State Department said, he had improperly socialized with female Soviet embassy employees and also possibly compromised the consulate's security. A fourth marine has been accused only of breaking rules by socializing with Soviet citizens.

President Reagan denounced the Soviet operation against the embassy as "outrageous." He added that the new American Embassy in Moscow, although nearly completed, might be torn down and rebuilt if an examination showed, as two members of Congress who inspected say, that it is so riddled with bugging devices that it is beyond repair. The Russians hit back by showing journalists spying devices said to have been discovered in the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

Mr. Reagan also ordered a study of security practices at embassies in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. But some members of Congress said the time for studies had passed. "The problems are already well known," said Senator Richard V. Lugar, Republican of Indiana and former chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. And in a 70-to-30 vote last week, the Senate urged Secretary of State George P. Shultz to cancel his trip to Moscow. He ignored the advice.

The Inman report said the seriousness of the security problems plaguing the Moscow embassy was matched or surpassed in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other Communist countries with significant K.G.B. presences. Because few of the chanceries in those countries are in free-standing buildings, it added, hostile intelligence agents could easily plant listening devices in the embassy walls.

Some of these buildings are due to be replaced. But 381 foreign nationals still work in embassies in Soviet client countries, the State Department said. "They're pervasive," an intelligence official said. "They work in the garages, the snack bars, reception areas, everywhere." A Congressional investigator added, "They see who comes and goes and pass that on to the local contacts with the K.G.B. Eventually they can figure out who the C.I.A. people are. In most of these countries, all of them are either K.G.B. agents, or have been co-opted by the K.G.B."

The same complaints had once been made about the Russians in the Moscow embassy. A State Department official said there were no immediate plans to replace local employees in Warsaw, Prague or other embassies. He repeated the argument the department had used to justify keeping Soviet employees in Moscow. "If you get rid of all the foreign nationals and build up the number of Americans," he said, "that's just that many more people for the K.G.B. to work on."